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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000753

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: MOLDOVA DOWNPLAYING GUAM BUT NO PLANS TO LEAVE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Rudolf V. Perina  
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

**¶11. (C) SUMMARY:** According to Moldovan FM Stratan, President Voronin's failure to attend the GUAM Summit in Batumi was an attempt to reassure the Russians, rather than a signal of Moldovan plans to leave GUAM. Moldova was trying to downplay GUAM participation in hopes of securing Russian support for a Transnistrian solution. Moldova finds that GUAM's utility has been limited to law enforcement and justice, particularly the VLEC center, and would like to see more economic cooperation projects. Moldova currently holds SECI presidency, and will use its upcoming chairmanship of the Council of CIS Prime Ministers to try to organize a joint meeting of the two organizations. End Summary.

MF Stratan Seeking to Balance Russian Interests

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**¶12. (C)** In a July 9 meeting with Foreign Minister Stratan, Charge Perina asked about President Voronin's absence from the GUAM Summit in Batumi. Stratan responded with unusual candor that President Voronin's failure to go to Batumi was linked to the next visit of Russian President Medvedev to Moldova. Stratan said that the Russians are very concerned about GUAM as a competitor to the CIS, and about Moldova's participation in the organization. Stratan said that Moldova is trying to balance the situation to avoid being accused by the Russians of going to GUAM to criticize Russia.

**¶13. (C)** Stratan noted that in November, Moldova will have the chairmanship of the Council of Prime Ministers of the CIS. He said that Moldova thus has to create conditions in which no one can object to its behavior, especially given its hopes of being able to reach a Transnistrian settlement. Stratan went on to note that Moldova now holds the Presidency of the South-Central European Initiative (SECI), and would plan to hold a joint meeting of SECI with the Prime Ministers of the CIS States. Bringing these two organizations together would provide an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest, including energy.

**¶14. (C)** Stratan noted that the previous day (July 8), in an interview with a Ukrainian newspaper, President Voronin had publicly stated that Moldova has no intention to leave GUAM. However, Voronin had told the interviewer that GUAM should have more concrete economic projects.

¶ 15. (C) In a separate meeting July 8, Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriu Ostalep also told Pol/Econ Chief that Moldova has no plans to leave GUAM. He said that he had not received any instructions from the President to prepare analysis or documentation to leave the organization. Instead, he had been given instructions to analyze the political and economic benefits for Moldova of remaining in GUAM. Ostalep said that he had prepared a modest assessment, arguing that the strongest benefits for Moldova are in the areas of justice and homeland security, particularly VLEC (Virtual Law Enforcement Center) exchanges of information.

¶ 16. (C) Ostalep did suggest that GUAM's other members derive more benefit from the organization than Moldova. He said that Azerbaijan uses GUAM to garner support for its position on Nagorno-Karabakh. Ukraine wants GUAM as a forum for asserting its regional leadership. For Moldova, however, GUAM does not have enough concrete economic benefits. Ostalep said that the GOM has some tentative ideas to launch economic projects, and he will include the question of concrete economic projects in his post-summit assessment report to President Voronin.

Comment

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¶ 17. (C) Though Moldovan participation in GUAM has been minimal (they still do not have a full-time representative in Kyiv and have not yet paid dues), it appears the GOM has no plans to withdraw from the organization. Stratan's explanation that Voronin fears Russia appears to be an open and frank description of the situation. President Voronin is trapped between East and West as he seeks greater European integration but still needs Moscow's help to get a Transnistrian settlement. GUAM is one area where concessions can be made to Moscow at little cost to Moldova. More concrete economic cooperation projects would help secure greater enthusiasm from the Moldovans for GUAM.

PERINA